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The Directorate of Inspections and Evaluations conducts objective and independent customer-focused management and program inspections addressing areas of interest to Congress and the Department of Defense, and provides timely findings and recommendations leading to positive changes in programs.

DoD Voting Assistance Program

March 2007

Who Should Read This Report

DoD civilian and military personnel who are responsible for the administration, oversight, and implementation of the Federal Voting Assistance Program and Military Services' voting assistance programs should read this report.

What Was Identified

The Inspectors General of the Military Departments characterized their 2006 DoD voting assistance programs as effective in accordance with the provisions of section 1566, title 10, United States Code. However, there continue to be opportunities to improve the provision of voting information and materials to absentee voters. Sixty-five percent of respondents to the DoD IG Voting Assistance Program questionnaire said they were aware of the Service voting assistance programs. Fifty-nine percent answered that they knew where to obtain voting information on base. Forty percent of the respondents indicated that they had received voting information and materials.

The Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps reported varying degrees of compliance with DoD Directive 1000.4, "Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)," April 14, 2004, and with their respective Service instructions. At the 10 DoD installations visited, we observed an insufficient number of designated Voting Assistance Officers. While this factor does not in and of itself indicate lack of effectiveness, it did, in some cases, prevent the Voting Assistance Officer from being fully compliant with Federal Voting Assistance Program and DoD requirements.

Knowledge of on-line information was not widespread. The questionnaire revealed that 23 percent of respondents knew their Service had a Web site dedicated to voting information and that 24 percent knew of the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site.

How It Can Be Improved

If fully implemented, recommendations in this report should facilitate compliance with DoDD 1000.4 and alleviate difficulties in disseminating voting information and material. The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness concurred with recommendations to provide guidance on commanders' flexibility in appointing Unit Voting Assistance Officers and on the importance of appointing civilian Installation Voting Assistance Officers, as well as to investigate authorizing the appointment of civilians as Unit Voting Assistance Officers. The Principal Deputy also concurred with the recommendation to comply with a previous recommendation to establish one-click links from the Service home pages to their voting assistance Web sites.